

OUR HOME

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SIGNIFICANCE OF "HOW DO YOU DO."

Prof. Mathews, in commenting on the forms of salutation used by different nations, says: "Of all the national forms of salutation, the most signally characteristic—the one which reveals the very core, the inmost 'heart of heart' of a people—is the Englishman's 'How do you do?' In those four little monosyllables, the activity, the intense practicality of the Englishman, the very quintessence of his character, are revealed as by a lightning flash. To do! Not to think, to stand, to carry yourself, but to do; and this doing is so universal among the English, its necessity is so completely recognized that no one dreams of asking whether you are doing, or what you are doing, but all demand, 'How do you do?'"

Dr. Mathews may be right with regard to the origin of the form of salutation, but whatever its meaning may once have been, it is now altogether different from that he assigns to it. Words and phrases sometimes undergo a change of signification; this may be an example of such a change

It is only necessary to listen to the usual answer to the question to know that it now signifies, what is the state of your health? The idiom is not even kept up in the answer which varies with the state of health of the person addressed. Thus, when well, in answer to the question "How do you do?" we say, "Quite well, thank you; how are you?" Note the form of answering the interrogation. Not "How do you?" but, "How are you?" "How do you do?" then, is a sign not of the general activity of the

age or of the race, but of its universal sickliness. Men in their desire for wealth or pleasure have little regard for health until they find it gone. Overwork, overeating, overdrinking, and a variety of other causes combine to make the majority of the race sick.

This universal sickliness has brought about the establishment of two distinct lines of business—the profession of medicine and the manufacture of medicine. The integrity of the medical profession is carefully guarded by law and by custom. A doctor is not allowed to practice until he has passed certain examinations and gone through a certain course of training. His certificate is a guarantee of a certain degree of knowledge and in the practice of his profession he is obliged to conform to certain well-defined rules of conduct. The manufacture of medicine is just as legitimate and just as necessary as the medical profession, but unfortunately it is impossible to throw the same safeguards around it. When a medicine becomes well known for its efficacy in curing disease and secures a wide sale, there are always inferior imitations placed upon the market. These inferior substitutes for medicines of well established reputation are often recommended to their customers by retail dealers in preference to the genuine article, because the manufacturers of them being able to produce the inferior article more cheaply offer the dealers a large commission. The retail dealers have nothing to gain in the long run by recommending such inferior medicines, but for the sake of a temporary advantage they often do so, and purchasers should be on their guard against such substitution. In buying